

DRAFT

*Watch Hill Fire District
Watch Hill, R.I. 02891*

DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING

Friday, September 9, 2016

4:00 p.m.

Fire Station

222 Watch Hill Road

Watch Hill, RI

A meeting of the District Council of the Watch Hill Fire District was held at the Watch Hill Fire Station at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, September 9, 2016.

The following members were present:

John M. Regan III, Deputy Moderator
Robert C. Murray, Treasurer
Paul Verbinnen, Finance Committee Chairman
Grant G. Simmons III, Chairman Park Commission
Andrew J. Parsons, Member at Large
William J. Miller, Jr., Member at Large
Dabney Pierce, Park Commission
Robert Peacock, Fire Chief

Also present were:

Mrs. Donna Simmons
Mr. George Nicholas
Mrs. Joann Nicholas
Mr. Courtney Sojka
Alicia Perrone, Fire District Office Manager

Proper notice having been given and a quorum being present, the Deputy Moderator, John M. Regan III, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of August 12, 2016, which were previously circulated, were approved.

Report of the Treasurer

Mr. Murray reported that the cash position of the Fire District is extraordinarily strong at this point. The current cash balance is \$732,000. At the same time last year the cash position was \$414,000. It is up almost \$300,000 from the previous year. More taxes were collected in August, possibly because the tax bills went out a little earlier this year. No spending has taken place yet for the two large items that have been budgeted for, which are the boat and the new alarm system. Finally, last week, after three years, the Watch Hill Yacht Club lease amendments were approved and finalized. Mr. Whitman is in the process of signing them.

Report of the Finance Committee

Mr. Verbinnen reported that it is still too early to discern any trends, so there is not too much to report at this time. Everything is on track.

Report of the Park Commission

Mr. Murray noted that the Larkin Lot is having a bumper year, which lead Mr. Simmons to his report and he stated that the Larkin Lot grossed more because of its ability to adjust prices and because the weather has been sensational.

The review of all of the leases has been taking place with the Bathhouse and the Merry-Go-Round having the most sticking points. They are going to be resolved and presented to the tenants, with new leases starting May 1 of next year. If they are not willing to come to terms with the new leases than new operators will have to be sought after. HOB Yachts is in good shape, with only some minor exceptions. The LLC component of the Larkin Road lot is still being resolved but it is in otherwise good shape.

Mr. Regan wanted to know when the leases would be ready for review by the Council. Mr. Simmons is hoping that everything can be ready for review at the November meeting. Mr. Regan wanted to note that a motion may be required at the November meeting pertaining to the revised leases.

Mrs. Nicholas questioned the situation regarding the bathrooms. Mr. Simmons replied that estimates are going to be solicited in order to ascertain the extent of repairs necessary. There are most likely short term as well as long term repairs needed. Mr. Simmons will have three separate contractors come in for estimates once the building is closed after Columbus Day.

Mr. Regan wants to target the Thanksgiving meeting for the assessment of the bathroom fix, which will involve reviewing the three potential bids, which he felt should be discussed at a public meeting because it is of high interest to the public and the community at large. As a follow up, Mr. Nicholas mentioned it is important to get the most qualified people to make the bids.

Chief Peacock had two questions, one regarding the leases and whether or not the leases automatically renewed unless certain specific actions were taken by either side by a certain date, and if so, were the required actions taken to prevent them from automatically renewing at this time. The second question being is there any reason that the beach gate and the Larkin Road lots are locked in the off-season. An answer to the first question was no as Mrs. Peirce responded that the appropriate action had been taken by the Park Commission to properly notify the lease holders that the leases were being reviewed and would not automatically renew this year in order to provide enough time to fully discuss and possibly negotiate revisions or changes. With regard to the parking lots being locked in the off-season, Mr. Simmons replied that it may possibly involve insurance issues. It was noted that the parking lots used to be open in the past during the off-season. Mrs. Pierce stated that there should be no limitations due to insurance. In addition, Chief Peacock said he would not be opposed to them being open after hours during the season as well.

Report of the Fire Department

Chief Peacock reported that the budget is on track. The fire alarms will be completed in the off season.

Calls are steady. Staffing is still an ongoing issue, with the need to hire two people becoming more evident. The per diem spots are not being filled.

The Board of Engineers wanted Chief Peacock to make sure that the Council would be okay with a second hand hull being purchased and outfitted with the motors and electronics versus a new boat. The warranty would not be the same because a used hull would not be warrantied. Both options require a slip which will be one slip that HOB cannot lease. The Council would not be opposed to the Board of Engineers making the recommendation as to whether to buy a new or a used boat as long as it is within the budgeted amount.

New Business

Mr. Verbinnen made a motion to authorized John M. Regan III to approve invoices and or payroll in the absence of Charles S. Whitman III. The motion was seconded and approved with Mr. Regan not voting for this motion.

Mr. Regan made a motion to adopt the Public Records Request Policy and Procedures and a Request form for Records. The motion was seconded and approved with Chief Peacock noting that the website address needed to be changed from that of the Firehouse to that of the Watch Hill Fire District.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Perrone
Office Manager